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Taal Inc: Pune's drum circle of life

Posted by [Ankur Borwankar](#) on January 14, 2012 in [Pune](#) · [0 Comments](#)

About author



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*Taal Inc, one of Pune's offbeat organisations, has grown from arranging private drumming sessions to community-engaging drum circles. **Ankur Borwankar** finds out how they trod the untrodden.*

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Conceived six years ago by Varun Venkit, Taal Inc has grown from private drumming sessions to community-engaging drum circles. Formally only about a year old, Taal Inc has already held over 55 drum circle sessions.



Venkit, a clinical psychologist, explains that Taal Inc is about creating harmony through beats. Everyone gets a drum (they have more than 1,200 of them). Venkit takes the sessions himself and the rest of the Taal Inc crew walks around helping people and enjoying themselves. Participants are free to make variations on the basic rhythm. Venkit also directs games with the circle, asking one half to play a beat and the other to disrupt them, and sometimes breaks out into a song and asks the circle to sing along. The atmosphere is electric and the drums thunderous. It's easy to lose yourself to the beat, and Venkit recommends you do.

The 1000+ attendee count at the Marriott Drum Circle last year was Taal's largest drum circle yet. In the journey from home studio to corporate

therapy, Taal Inc has stayed true to the religion of percussion and the

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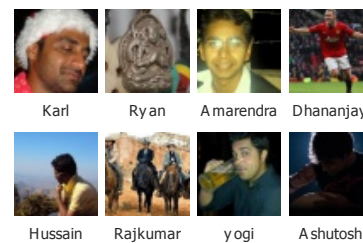
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drum circle has affirmed it: Taal Inc is about the music of the soul.

Taal Inc's *djembe* (pronounced jem-bay) and drum-kit training wing is called School of

Rhythm. The *djembe* is an African percussion instrument symbolically played at a peaceful gathering. Every Sunday evening, Taal Inc's school of rhythm makes its way to [High Spirits](#) in Koregaon Park. From 4pm to 7pm, the café has been described to "explode in captivating rhythm." Passers-by are known to be entranced and lured into the café.

The rhythm ensemble, or simply the Taal Band, is its official music face. The members of the band are drawn from School of Rhythm and the line-up is at least three *djembes*, three bass drums and a lot of other instruments and vocals. The genre is Traditional West African Folk and they also throw in a few recognisable beats in performances sometimes. The ensemble also features with other bands such as Agnee. Varun tells us to expect new singles with the Taal Inc signature by the year end. They have performed at NH7 as well.



The drum circle is their third wing. They organise circles on a corporate level (The Marriott Drum Circle was one) as well as on a community level. The community drum circles are held at [Arc Asia](#) in Koregaon Park, after a change from the previous location in Pashan.



Taal Inc is also involved in social work, bringing the magic to children and even victims of crime. The mind easily comprehends rhythm and the benefits of drumming are eminent.

Venkit believes every

house must have a *djembe*, and many already do in support. The drum circle is a therapeutic tool and an escape from the humdrum of life. It is for these reasons that you will find people of all ages here. Apart from the usual expansion plans, Venkit predicts that 2012 will be the year of the *djembe*.



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The next drum circle is on Saturday, January 14 @ Arc Asia, Koregaon Park from 6pm to 7.30pm. Come. Drum. Be one.

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